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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC #6640-83
14 September 1983

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution

FROM : Major General Edward B. Atkeson, USA
National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose ForcesSUBJECT : Soviet Division Categorization and GSFG Manning Levels

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1. The recent publication of DIA's Intelligence Appraisal, Warsaw Pact: Division Categorization (DIAIAPPR 102-83, dated 6 September 1983), coupled with analysis of GSFG division manning levels, suggests that we may be faced with some tough issues that have far-reaching implications.

- The DIA publication tends to formalize DoD's adoption of the six-category system for describing Soviet division manning that was introduced in the IIM on The Readiness of Soviet Ground Forces. According to the IIM and the DIA publication, all GSFG divisions are held at "Full Strength Ready" status in peacetime,

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- Recent analysis of peacetime manning in GSFG and the potential impact of division restructuring on manning requirements suggests that GSFG divisions could be manned

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below the
cut-off for "Full Strength Ready" divisions.

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2. If these judgments are correct, they have a number of implications for MBFR, readiness, and warning. At a minimum, there appears to be a need for additional assessment and discussion, as preparations for the NATO MC-161/83 conference get under way

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- Should GSFG divisions be downgraded to "Reduced Strength Ready I" status? This would have the effect of lowering their readiness status and would have far-reaching political ramifications, both in the US and Europe.

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- Is the six-category system valid for describing peacetime readiness of Soviet forces in estimates? If GSFG divisions are manned at [] hardly any Soviet divisions, other than airborne divisions, would meet the criterion for "Full Strength Ready" status.
- Should we adopt the six-category system for US analyses but continue to support the current system for NATO? This might reduce the political impact of apparently downgrading GSFG readiness, but could lead to confusion and misunderstanding.

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3. I would like to host a meeting of knowledgeable analysts on 28 September 1983 to discuss the evidence on peacetime manning practices, the impact of force restructuring on wartime strengths, and the implications outlined above. The meeting will be held in room 2E49, CIA Headquarters Building starting at 1000. Space is limited, so please provide names of attendees and clearances as soon as possible to []

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